

And There Is No Explosion

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Summary:

Stan still has nightmares as a seventeen year old boy. Mike, the caring boyfriend, is around to save the morning.

And There Is No Explosion

The lights the lights the lights. Stan couldn't breathe he couldn't breathe and it was dark; it was dirty and Stan couldn't catch any air to breathe. He was scared and dirty and he didn't know where he was, where is he? He couldn't speak or call for help. The lights the lights the lights the lights.

Stan shot up from a laying position and took a large gasping breath and he wasn't seeing the deadlights. He was seeing the bookshelf that Mike had across his bed against the wall. Stan's breath was short as he frantically looked around the room, trying to get a grasp of where he was. He was in twin bed, with beige sheets around him (Stan's bed was full size, and he had light blue sheets). In the corner of the room was a dresser, some of the drawers half open with clothes hanging out. Stan sighed a little bit with ease and recognition. Stan had spent last night at Mike's house.

Stan spent the night at Mike's farm often enough and he loved staying at Mike's house. Mike's dad was cool and let them do much of what they wanted without questioning them too much. Whether that be playing in the field which Mike called his backyard or sitting in Mike's room while listening to something on Mike's radio. Stan thought Mike's house was peaceful.

When they hung out at Stan's house, Mrs. Uris was always checking in on them, about every hour until she was satisfied that they were asleep and in between Mrs. Uris checkups there were Mr. Uris checkups (though they were less often than Mrs. Uris's). They couldn't get away with anything (though they didn't try to get away with too much) and they knew that sometime Mrs. Uris would come in asking them when they would start getting ready for bed. At Mike's they were given free reign over the house and the farm, only Mrs. Hanlon checked in when they were getting too loud (with Mike and Stan was unlikely) or when the parents were going to bed. Stan felt so much more comfortable in Mike's bedroom than when Mike was in his own.

As of now however, Stan couldn't calm himself down. For what Stan could remember he was back in the dirty sewer with his eyes staring down his throat and looking at the lights. The deadlights. He was

there and he was alone and *Fuck, Stan didn't want to be alone*. Stan could feel the lump in his throat, bobbing, and then Stan felt the tears in his eyes as he stared at the bedsheets on his lower half.

He's had these nightmares before- it used to be every night, the open wounds under his bandages would ache and Stan could do nothing because his parents couldn't see the teeth marks, the open wounds, or the blood that was pouring down his face and his neck. Nightmares of the blood and the dirt and It's mouth on his face. Now, four years later they still happened. Those mornings he woke up, threw up in the bathroom toilet, showered, and gotten dressed. By the time his small routines were finished he felt a little better- still awful and sick but better than before. After he would spend time with his friends and boyfriend and he would forget about the lights, the dirt, and Its teeth until he had another nightmare where he would remember it all again.

Stan could feel the tears on hot on his cheeks and he tried to wipe them away with the back of his hands but his hands were shaking. Where was Mike? Mike had been next to him on his right when they had fallen asleep late at night. He can't remember Mike leaving. Stan felt like calling throughout the house for Mike

(What if It got Mike? What if It got Mike?)

but Mike's parents were most likely still in the house and Stan didn't want their questions about why he was screaming and crying.

As if Mike knew something was wrong he went back into his room to join his sleeping boyfriend in bed. To Stan, the door to Mike's bedroom opened- it seemed sudden and him seeing the door swing out of the corner of his eye made him jump, putting his back to the wall to see what came through.

(Not It. Not It. Not It.)

Mike came through, still in his pajamas, and soft on his feet because when he left the bed Stan was sleeping next to him. Mike looked over at his bed and saw his boyfriend, Stan's eyes wide, frantic, and red. Stan held himself back, scared and shaking until he realized that it was Mike behind the door and not the lady with the twisted face or

the rotting bodies of the dead kids.

Stan couldn't think about not wanting Mike to see him like this because when Mike sat on the bed Stan immediately clung to him, letting himself sob freely. Mike didn't know what to say so he didn't say anything, just held Stan's shaking shoulders in his hands and dug his face into Stan's messy curls as Stan's face was resting on Mike's chest. Stan took a shaky breath and tried to gain his almost nonexistent composure but it wasn't working as well as he had hoped.

"S-sorry." Stan mumbled to Mike, wrapping his arms around Mike's torso and hugging him a little closer.

"You don't have to tell me you're sorry, Stanley." Mike whispered.

"I woke up and you were gone." Stan clutched to Mike's pajama shirt and moved himself so that he was sitting in Mike's lap. Mike tightened his arms around Stan to make up for the close difference.

"I know, I'm sorry. Mom and Dad were heading into town and they woke me up to tell me they were leaving and so I could lock the door behind them." Mike lifted one of his hands and raked it through Stan's hair to try to calm his trembling nerves. It was hard to see Stan like this- it reminded him all too much of the days after the summer of 1989 when Stan was crying into Mike's shoulder more often than not. It hurt Mike's soul. In a softer tone, Mike asked, "Was it the sewer again?"

Stan nodded his head. As if it would be anything else. Mike let his cheek fall on top of Stan's head and continued to play with the ends of Stan's curls. "Do you want to lay down?"

Stan nodded again, not trusting his voice. Mike, as carefully as he could, laid down on his back with Stan against him. Stan automatically curled up against Mike even more, wrapping his legs around Mike's. Stan closed his eyes and tried to fight the intrusive thoughts that were telling that he was still dirty, still lost, that grime and filth was still on him *somewhere* even though that happened years ago and he had been clean when he fell asleep last night. He wanted to take a wash rag and *scrub* at his skin until all the remembered and

imaginary blood and dirt was clean and left his slightly raw skin.

Mike understood his boyfriend's nightmares. He understood Stan not wanting to sleep alone. He understood why Stan didn't go to his father's office in the synagogue anymore. When they first became friends after the rock fight he didn't understand any of it, but as they grew to be friends Mike learned what set Stan off and he knew remembering set him off. Mike did the only thing he knew to do- he held Stan tightly.

Stan calmed a little easier than in the past because now, in Mike's arms, he knew he wasn't alone. In the cold order of his bedroom Stan didn't know if his friends would be there to meet him at school or the Barrens, but Mike held Stan so tight that there wasn't enough room between them for Stan's intrusive thoughts and anxieties. Stan's breath shuttered but began to become even and deep. He stayed quiet- taking advantage of the morning and of his loving boyfriend holding him in bed. Days like this did not come often and even when Stan felt like shit he loved his boyfriend.

Love. Stan hadn't told Mike that yet, but he felt it every day.

"Are you feeling a little better?" Mike whispered, his hand rubbed on Stan's back, up and down and in between his shoulder blades. Stan nodded his head.

"Yeah, a little." Stan lifted his head up and kissed Mike's jaw, the only place he could reach. Then rested his head on Mike's shoulder. "Thanks, Mikey."

"You don't have to thank me, Stanley. I want to be here with you."

Stan stopped and smiled. He scooted himself up on the bed a little so he could be face to face with Mike and leaned in to kiss his boyfriend on the lips. Mike reciprocated, moving his hand to Stan's face.

In the past six months (seven months, Mike argued) Stan has been so much happier than he could imagine. Especially since their friends (and they suspected Mike's dad) know about them and they could be together. They could hold hands and be boyfriends and Mike could hold Stan when they were in bed and not feel shameful about it. They

enjoyed themselves so much- and they couldn't imagine a life where less than a year ago Stan and Mike sat on Stan's bed and Stan took the leap of faith and kissed him.

Mike pulled away from Stan with a smile on his face. He took the hand that was on Stan's face and rubbed the pad of his thumb against Stan's cheek. They way Stan looked at Mike, it made his heart thump a little faster and his knees a little weaker.

"I love you." Stan whispered, keeping contact with Mike's eyes to show he's serious. Stan was serious about Mike and he was serious about loving him.

Mike's adoring smile seemed to freeze. Stan held his questioning gaze even though he felt like looking away or hiding under the covers as if that would brace the impact of the words he just spoke. Instead of going with his instincts and shying away, Stan stood his ground, metaphorically of course.

"Really?" Mike asked with wide eyes and his mouth turning upward in an unrestricted and unabashed smile. "You love me, Stanley?"

Mike looked at Stan and *Lord, thank you for sending me this boy*. Stan nodded his head. "I love you, Mike."

Mike didn't need to think, he didn't need any time to consider it. "I love you too, Stan."

Stan could die now. Yep, five minutes ago he was crying his eyes out and Mike came and was here and Stan loved him. Mike loved him too.

Stan was sure someone wouldn't love him. First, Stan was weird. With his kooky and hard to understand humor, his strange fixations, and his love of the not-girl gender Stan thought he could never, would never get a chance on a guy like Mike. A guy who was caring, and sweet and was so utterly *him*. In Stan's eyes, Mike shouldn't change because all he is is perfection.

Mike thought Stan was what he needed in every aspect of his life and as they would continue to live Mike wanted Stan in every part of it.

When they would finish high school and when they went to college and if they decided to stay in Derry or if they left the cursed town with a lasting memory of dust coming from the back of Mike's pick-up truck as they looked through the rearview mirror. Mike wanted Stan every step of the way and to simply share his life with him. That's all it took.

Maybe that was talk for another time, maybe a time in the future but now Mike held Stan's face in his as they laid in bed. A kiss seemed too cliché, too expected, and maybe a kiss held a little less meaning right now?

Mike's were cold from being up out of bed and from not being covered up. They were cold on Stan's still tear streaked face but Mike's hands were somehow always cold so Stan was used to the biting of it and Stan put his hands on top of Mike's that were resting on his face.

Stan felt the need to repeat himself because of the emotional morning. "I love you, Mike."

"I love you, Stanley."